

Syntax

This section covers the following topics:

- General Information
 - Formats
 - Multiple Fields
 - Periodic Groups
 - Object Descriptions
 - Comments
-

General Information

Each EOR (NOP) logical record is represented by one entry in external format. The entry is enclosed in OBJECT=<Object-type> and END-OBJECT keywords.

Example:

```
OBJECT=NETWORK-MASTER  
...  
END-OBJECT
```

encloses a network master definition.

after END-OBJECT a comment is written which repeats, similar to the Natural programming syntax, object type, object name and the lines that were written:

```
END-OBJECT /* JOB-MASTER JOB-XY 48 lines
```

Each field is represented by keyword and value.

Examples:

```
OWNER=EXAMPLE  
SH-DESC=This is an example  
EST=141030
```

A keyword must be immediately followed by an equal sign (=). Everything after the 'equal' sign until the next keyword is assumed to belong to the field. The equal sign (=) should not appear in the value itself, but is accepted anyway.

- Several keywords and fields may appear on one line.
- The sequence of fields within a record is meaningless.
- For numeric fields, a decimal point (.) and comma (,) are accepted as decimal separators during import.

Formats

A	alpha	unchanged (sometimes in apostrophes)
N,I,P	numeric	ECDIC/ASCII digits. Natural Edit Mask using e.g. ZZZZ9.99 must be a valid input for the Natural VAL function .maximum 2 decimal digits.
D	date	YYYYMMDD
T	time	HHISS (Hours 0-24) (Natural type T, only time used)
DT	date and time	YYYYMMDDHHISS (Hours 0-24) (Natural type T, complete timestamp)
L	logical value	In the database represented by A1 containing Y or N. As external value: Y, N, yes, no, true, false in lower or upper case.

Multiple Fields

Keywords, which correspond to multiple fields, may appear several times in the external format record.

Example:

```
EX-DATE=20011120 EX-DATE=20011220
```

Periodic Groups

Periodic group fields must follow each other for one entity.

A **group identifier** must precede a group entry.

Example:

```
IN-CONDITION COND=COND1 COND-REF=RUN COND-EXIST=Y
IN-CONDITION COND=COND2 COND-REF=DAT COND-EXIST=N
```

defines 2 subsequent input conditions.

On input, the internal group counter is incremented if the group identifier appears.

For groups and multiple fields, it is possible that other fields are defined between them, since the import processing will keep track of the highest used index.

Object Descriptions

Prose is imported and exported as OBJECT-TYPE=DESCRIPTION.

Prose texts beginning with T=. Lines longer than 70 are split.

Prose description records should be contiguous.

Comments

Lines starting with an asterisk `*` are treated as comments.

Furthermore, line comments can be appended or inserted starting and ending with `(/*)` (if inserted).

The comment start `(/*)` is accepted only at line begin, or if it follows at least one blank.